

Changes in Socioeconomic Status Indicators and Common Mental Disorders Among Mothers in Rural Pakistan

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BACKGROUND

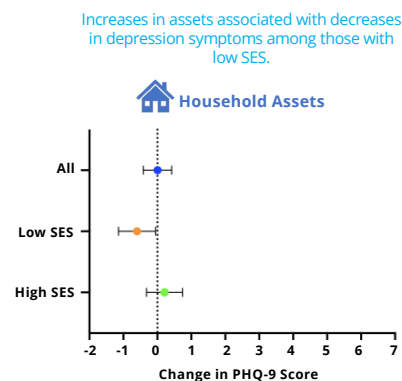
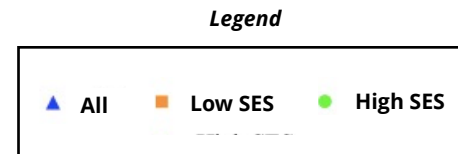
Previous research has established a link between lower socioeconomic status (SES) and common mental disorders (CMDs), especially in low- or middle-income countries. This study explores how changes in SES over time influence mental health outcomes by investigating the impact of changes in socioeconomic status (SES) indicators on common mental disorders (CMDs) among mothers in rural Pakistan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

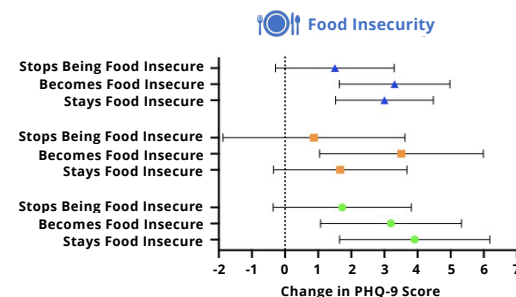
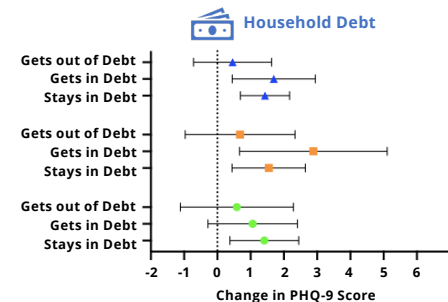
- How does changing assets over a 4-year period relate to changes in depressive symptoms?
- How does changing debt and food insecurity over a 1-year period relate to changes in anxiety and depression symptoms?
- How does the relationship between SES and CMDs vary based on SES grouping at the outset?

	SES Indicator	Analysis Timespan
	Household Assets	4 years
	Household Debt	1 year
	Food Insecurity	1 year

DEPRESSION (PHQ-9) ANALYSIS



New and chronic debt and food insecurity generally associated with increases in depression symptoms.



DATA AND METHODS

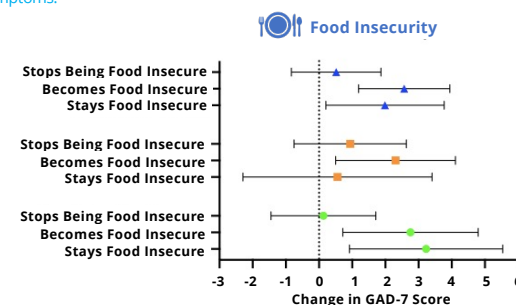
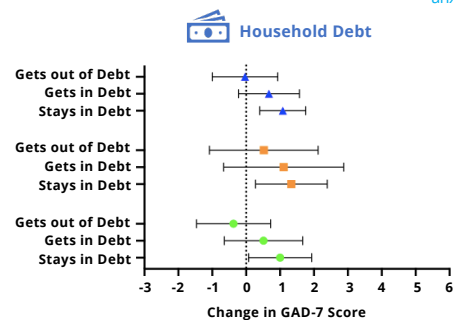
Using longitudinal data from the Bachpan study, I examined how shifts in household asset, debt, and food insecurity indicators affect depression (PHQ-9 score) and anxiety (GAD-7 score) symptoms among mothers (n= 802). Changes in symptoms were plotted relative to the change in symptoms of participants in favorable SES conditions. The study employs linear regression analysis, controlling for various demographic factors, to assess the association.

RESULTS

SES indicators have differential effects on mental health, particularly among different SES groups. Increases in assets were associated with decreases in depression symptoms, but solely among mothers with low SES. Similarly, chronic debt and food insecurity were linked to elevated levels of depression and anxiety, with variations observed across SES groups. Surprisingly, getting out of debt or food insecurity did not immediately translate into positive mental health outcomes.

ANXIETY (GAD-7) ANALYSIS

New and chronic debt and food insecurity generally associated with increases in anxiety symptoms.



DISCUSSION

Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering dynamic changes in SES when examining mental health outcomes, particularly in low- or middle-income countries like Pakistan. The results suggest that the psychological effect of financial stressors is long-lasting, so interventions that focus on prevention would be beneficial. Understanding these relationships can inform targeted interventions to alleviate the burden of CMDs among vulnerable populations.